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# THE LOWERY ROAD

L. A. G. STRONG

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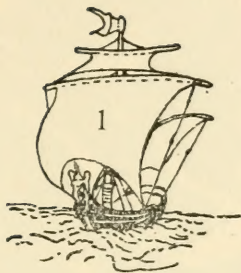






"ADVENTURERS ALL." NEW SERIES.

No. 1.



THE LOWERY ROAD,

# Adventurers All.

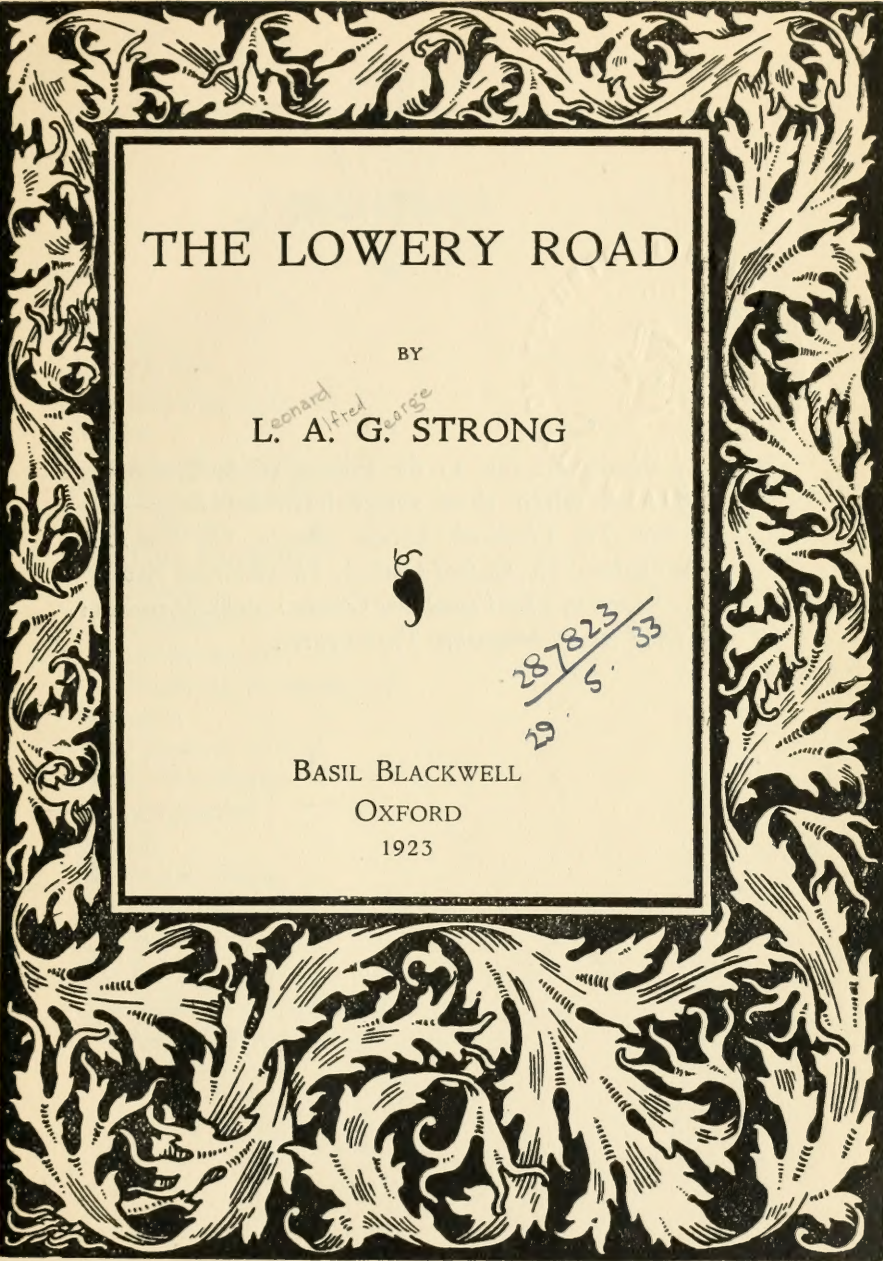
A SERIES OF YOUNG POETS  
UNKNOWN  
TO FAME.

(B)



Come my friends.... 'Tis not too late to seek a  
newer world. It may be that the gulfs will wash  
us down .... It may be we shall touch the happy isles  
Yet our purpose holds... to sail beyond the sunset.

*Ulysses*



# THE LOWERY ROAD

BY

*Leonard Alfred George*  
L. A. G. STRONG



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In Affectionate Memory  
of

W. S. CASE

Musician, Wit, and Man of Letters,  
Who followed joyous adventures  
And died sorely against his will.

*By the same Author.*

Dublin Days. 1921. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Dublin Days. 1923. With additional Poems.

Boni and Liveright. New York.

## PREFACE.

THE Lowery Road branches to the right of the main road some half mile above Dousland Barn, climbs a short steep hill, and reaches the Northern slope of Yennadon. Then at a finger post it turns Eastward, going under Lowery Hill (—‘ow’ sounded as in cow—) to Leathertor. Here, by a stone cross, there is a division, one road passing the Meavy Valley by Leathertor Bridge, the other descending through a little gate to Nosworthy, and winding along Dean Combe to Cuckoo Rock and Combeshead.

This country, and all around it, I have known from childhood, till at last I find myself almost reckoning life in terms of it, and referring to it each new experience. The verses here collected, with the exception of a few which belong to memory, are a first confession of faith in it.

Strangely enough, the moor and its valleys seem to have inspired but little poetry. We have many Dartmoor novels. One of them, Mr. Eden Phillpotts’ “The Virgin in Judgment,” describes beautifully this very country ; yet, generally speaking, the poets have

left it alone. Browne of Tavistock sings of Walla Brook, and Carrington of the Dewerstone. Ernest Radford, besides the well-known poem on Plymouth Harbour, published in his "Chambers Twain" poems on Shaugh Bridge and Axtown. As far as I know—I cannot claim to have read widely—these are the only poets of note who have sung this part of Devon. Yet our place-names are full of melody: Lovaton, Meavy, Yennadon: and Sheepstor is as bold as Bredon.

The late Sir Walter Raleigh was once asked why Cambridge had so many more of the poets than Oxford. He answered whimsically that at Oxford the senses were so steeped in beauty that imagination had little need to build a fairer city. Perhaps in like way the complete beauty of the moor brings satiety and keeps the imagination from seeking adventure abroad. We apprehend in the spirit, and are content.

Or does the cause lie deeper? Is the secret of the moor among those which cannot be 'said in rhyme'? Poets, Mr. W. B. Yeats has said, are not permitted to shoot beyond the tangible: so, perhaps, the moor, with its intangible mystery, has seemed a forbidden land: its exaltation, inarticulate save in the singing voice or the long savage rhythm of the stride, has silenced those who would transmute it into the petty coin of words.

However, even if this is so—which I do not believe, since every poet seeks in his way to translate a mystery—it is no reason why less ambitious efforts should not be made, such as this little record of sights and sounds and faces. The secret of the moor may be out of reach, but not so the life around it: and perhaps, since the approach to all mysteries is by initiation and humility, the novice may learn in time to strike a deeper note. Moreover, if he is honest, he does not choose his subject in cold blood. Rather it fastens upon his mind and gives him no peace till he has done his uttermost; and often very little peace even then.

I hope, in conclusion, that those who know this part of Devon will feel kindly towards this little book. They are likely to be its sternest critics, since it only tells them of what they know, and theirs will be to discover whether the names of the places they love have been taken in vain.



## LOWERY COT.

(For Robert Graves).

THIS is the house where Jesse White  
Run staring in one misty night,  
And said he seed the Holy Ghost  
Out to Lowery finger-post.

Said It rised up like a cloud  
Muttering to Itself out loud,  
And stood tremendous on the hill  
While all the breathing world was still.

They put en shivering to bed,  
And in three days the man was dead.  
Gert solemn visions such as they  
Be overstrong for mortal clay.

## THE OLD POSTMAN.

HERE he sits who day by day  
Tramped his quiet life away :  
Knew a world but ten miles wide,  
Cared not what befel outside.

Nor, his tramping at an end,  
Has he need of book or friend.  
Peace and comfort he can find  
In the laneways of his mind.

## WINTER.

THE winter trees like great sweep's brushes  
Poke up from deep earth, black and bare :  
Suddenly stir, and shake a crowd  
Of sooty rooks into the air.

## THE POET AND THE STARS.

STARS, I would praise you  
Over Lowery Hill.  
Stars, I would praise you,  
Who have but my will  
And little bag of words.

"Do you love a buzzing gnat ?

"Far less than that

"We account your words,

"O vain of new found tongue :

"We saw your fat earth frisk when it was young."

Stars, I will praise you ;  
Even to a gnat  
We grant his tiny day.  
Though you account me not,  
Yet I will praise you :  
I will have my say.

## THE BALLAD OF THE PAINTER.

### I.

HE painted the Mayor and the Mayor's wife  
Till a kingfisher dropped a feather.  
He named his God and he packed his paints  
And ran away altogether.

Will they know me, he cried, will they know my mind,  
And slow was the tread of his coming  
Till a hen robin perched on the breast of his coat,  
And the painter's heart went drumming.

So they bade him a welcome, beast and bird,  
To heather and hedge and stream ;  
And he knew for a wonderful starry while  
A life as sweet as a dream.

II.

THE herons would come and stretch their wings  
And stand for his moonlight easels ;  
The bittern and furze-chat told him tales,  
And he danced in the mist with the weasels.

He'd sit in the sun on a stone and stroke  
The head of the criss-cross adder,  
And bare his arm to oblige the leech  
Till she swelled herself into a bladder.

He painted the young rabbit's portrait, while  
The blue jay sat by jeering,  
And sang to the ladybird, suiting his voice  
To her delicate sense of hearing.

He'd sit by the river and share his meal  
With clustering friendly fishes,  
While the wagtail made herself waiting maid  
To see to washing the dishes.

THE BALLAD OF THE PAINTER

III.

HE died in the shade of an elder tree  
With his head in a clump of nettles,  
Where Nature was fighting a losing fight  
With castaway tins and kettles.

And thither came all the beasts he had loved  
With this late but inborn passion,  
And ate the remains of their friend and god  
In a thoroughly Christian fashion.

And some of him lives in the elder tree  
And some in the raven's belly.  
The horse put his hoof on the strong back bone  
For the tit to pick the jelly.

Thus all waxed richer, beetle and grass  
And worm, for the flesh they tasted.  
His beautiful body was eaten up  
And none of his goodness wasted.

And so the painter is still a part  
Of the life he loved around him,  
And nothing was left but his broken bones  
To stare at the men that found him.

## MAN'S WAY.

JANE, she could not :  
Fay, she could.  
Mary would not,  
Kitty would.

My curse on Mary,  
Tears for Jane.  
Kitty I'll love  
And love again.

Yet in the end  
I'll marry Fay.  
Forgive it, Kitty,  
'Tis man's way.

## THE FOUR PARISHES.

(For Frances Treglohan).

### MEAVY.

**M**EAVY is in the valley, sleepy and old.  
The years lie light  
Upon St. Peter's brown church, by whose side,  
As if in spite  
Of Death, the old oak blossoms undecayed.

The hours pass very sweetly there : each full  
And quiet chime  
Flies off unheeded like a dove to seek  
The cotes of Time.  
Death comes so gently there, none are afraid.

## SHEEPSTOR.

THE little granite church upholds  
Four pinnacles like holy hands,  
A missionary proclaiming God  
To ancient unbelieving lands.

Long time it dared the indifferent hills  
Child-like, half frightened, all alone,  
Lest chink of matin bell offend  
The mother of its quarried stone.

Now it is proven and at peace,  
Yet may not sleep, remembering  
How on the moor above it stand  
Stone row and mound and pagan ring.

## WALKHAMPTON.

### I.

**F**ROM the church tower  
For a mile around  
Bells in the evening  
Shed a quiet sound.

Little folk like maggots  
Climb the high hill  
In the yellow sunset  
To work God's will.

### II.

**T**HE tall tower, swirled and plucked with waves of wind,  
Shakes out its crash of music in the air  
Impatiently, exultantly,  
A swimmer shaking water from his hair.

### III.

**T**HE good folk stagger up the hill  
In broadcloth black of Sunday best,  
Gripping their hats, and blow, and turn  
Their dubious eyes upon the West.

Like flame above their heads, gust-flung,  
Gust-buffeted, flares out and swells  
Upon an evening wild with wind  
The clangour of the flying bells.

## BUCKLAND MONACHORUM.

BUCKLAND bells, Buckland bells ;  
Every note at evening tells  
Before the light be come again  
There will be rain : there will be rain.

As he puts his fowls to bed  
Farmer Eli shakes his head  
To hear them chiming in the West.  
House is best : house is best.

Thick gray clouds are touching down  
On Hessary and Mis Tor crown.  
Come in and set the logs alight :  
There will be streams of rain to-night.

## EPITAPHS.

### I.

**H**ERE lies Sam Cheale, a quiet man  
Whose whistle was his only pride,  
Which same he played uncommon well.  
We have no music since he died.

### II.

**B**ENEATH this stone is laid  
A slender maid  
Whom many would have loved in vain.

### III.

**L**OOK up, O living passer by,  
And see the white clouds in the sky :  
Look round on this dear valley land  
With Meavy Church on thy right hand,  
And in thy mercy shed a tear  
For the blind thing buried here.

## THE COLOURED WORLD.

I HAVE seen so much beauty in my life,  
That if my time should come to leave the world  
I think I should not grudge it. I remember  
How, when a child, I watched the setting sun  
Wink in a castle window on Dalkey Hill ;  
And, from my uncle's house, stared at the wide  
Bright path the moon makes on Killiney Bay  
When she is in the East. No more a child  
I watched the pilgrim seasons of my years  
Pass grandly over Dartmoor, and none unkind . . .

Thus vision upon vision would swim clear  
Before my eyes, like pictures in a well ;  
And I should go with every sense's tribute ;  
Hear songs of voices dead ; still feel, perhaps,  
The backwash tugging at my little feet  
With hiss of pebbles, fading to a sigh . . .

Thus, though I love the coloured world, and pray  
Eagerly for a length of shining days,  
I hope that, if the count fell, I should go  
With no vain crying nor with stubborn teeth  
And tight-clenched sweating hands ; but quietly  
Be musing, till at last the brain's great lights  
Dwindled to points : and lying without stir,  
Beyond resenting and beyond content,  
Feel my loved world ebb from me like a tide.

## DOWN TOR STONES.

YOU told me once that, if you died, you would crave  
High burial such as these beneath the lark.  
And I said 'yes'—thinking how none should mark  
If a lone man came often to your grave.

## A CONVERSATION.

SAYS Parson to Farmer Jack in the lane  
“Hullo then, Farmer, to work again?  
“You’re sixty-seven, now, if you’re a day,  
“With a tidy bit put by, I’ll lay.  
“You’ve done your share and you’ve worked full measure,  
“Why don’t you leave off and take your pleasure?  
“Other folk do it. Why should’nt you?”  
“Ah, Passen” says Farmer “and so I do.  
“My pleasure be this, for to work and make;  
“Tid’n all for me wive and datter’s sake.  
“If they gets so much pleasure to take and spend it  
“As ’tis for me to make and tend it,  
“They’m pleased, and I’m pleased, and we’m all content.  
“Good day to ee, Passen.”

And off he went.

## A SONG.

(For Sheila Murray).

WOULD I were hearing now  
On Leathertor the plover's cry,  
And seeing Sheepstor brow  
Softened upon the sky.

Treading a westward pace  
Upon the Lowery road again,  
Feeling upon my face  
The fingers of the rain.

Watching against the sky  
On Lowery height  
The moorland train go by,  
A little town of light.

## NOSWORTHY FARM.

THE ivy drips upon the ruined walls  
With each faint breath of wind, although the rain  
Lifted an hour ago : and fitfully  
Upon the sobbing dusk rises and falls  
A whimper, like a child dreaming of pain.

O stranger, do they tell of Will Tremayne ?  
I burned his poems and I drowned myself.  
He kissed the lips that I alone should kiss,  
And when he died, revengefully for this  
I burned his poems and I drowned myself,  
A dark uneasy night of wind and rain.

All joy was stolen from me, and I sought  
To find his spirit out, and bitterly  
Reveal to him the vengeance I had wrought.  
For as he died "Keep them for me," said he,  
"My poems, John, my immortality,"  
—Thinking I could not know what he had done.

I burned them all to ashes, one by one.

But I have never found him anywhere ;  
Alien from dead and quick, I drift alone.  
And on wet windy nights sigh round these walls,  
And all my hapless tale unheeded falls  
As raindrops from the ivy on the stone.  
But tell me—is his name remembered there  
In the warm world of men ? Has any word  
Escaped to mock my death and present pain ;  
Or is he naught, and all his song unheard ?  
O stranger, do they tell of Will Tremayne ?

## DRIZZLECOMBE STONES.

WHERE was a town the rabbit plays.  
The brown man of forgotten days  
Is sleeping where beneath the moon  
He knelt to ask a hunting boon.

The white scuts bob among the stones  
That still are faithful to his bones,  
And soft uncomprehending eyes  
Behold his work without surprise.

## CUT HILL.

UNDER the huge sky and the clouds I see  
From this high peat-cut point of southern ground  
Far westward Cornwall twinkle, and the tors  
Like giant quoits flung carelessly around.

## THE ROADMENDER.

HERE be an old man crackin' stones,  
And the damp is in his bones.  
His conduc' don't at all agree  
With story-book philosophy.

I've seed en stoopy for his shoes  
And hurt his ancient creaky thews ;  
And strings of spittin' swears 'e said,  
And clipped his grandchild 'cross the 'ead.

## THE BALLAD OF THE CARPENTERS.

(For John Ecclestone).

AN ancient woman met with me,  
Her voice was silver as her hair,  
Her wild black eyes were certainly  
The strangest I have seen.  
She told a tale of carpenters  
Who laboured for a queen.

“I had an island in a lake  
A wide lake, a quiet lake  
Of sweet security.  
I called them to me by the lake,  
And they came gladly for my sake,  
My seven singing carpenters,  
To build a house for me.

“They brought the hammers and the nails,  
The pegs, the twine, the chisel blade,  
The saw and whizzing plane.  
They brought good share of timber wood,  
Of resin wood, sweet smelling wood  
Split kindly to the grain.  
They brought them all for love of me ;  
They did not seek for gain.

THE BALLAD OF THE CARPENTERS    🐼

“ They built a house of singing wood,  
The white wood, the splendid wood,  
And made it snug around.  
Their hammers on the ringing wood  
Made all the lake resound.

“ The tench stirred dimly in his dream,  
The glowing carp, the silly bream  
Could hear the muffled sound.

“ But someone grudged the fragrant wood  
And sent a storm upon my house,  
A black flood, a silver flood  
Of wind and stinging rain.  
The waters writhed in hissing rage,  
The yelling wind, the rain-pocked waves  
Rose in a hurricane.

“ The slaty waves foamed hillock high,  
The thunder pranced about the sky,  
The lightning's bare and crooked fang  
Gleamed where the cloud-lip curled.

“ And when the calm came and the peace  
Of wind's cease and water's cease,  
My house and seven carpenters  
Had vanished from the world.”

## THE GRAY NAVVY.

FROM Devil's Bent Elbow to Princetown Pound  
Up the slope of the steep hard ground  
Goes a gray navvy who makes no sound.  
Dogs' backs bristle and ponies shy  
Turning the white of a startled eye  
When that gray navvy goes drifting by.

## BY THE FIRELIGHT.

"IF my baby have a squint,  
I shall kill it, Mother."  
"Hush, thou mump-head, do not tell so,"  
Says her kindly mother.  
"Thou would love him dearly, dearly,  
"More than any other."  
"But my baby shall not squint—  
Say he shall not, Mother?"  
"No, my lovely, that he shall not,"  
Says her kindly mother.  
"He shall have bright starry eyes,  
Cheeks so firm as apple pies,  
He shall chuckle lovely-wise,  
Louder, sweeter,  
Rounder, fuller,  
Better every way than any other!"

## THREE FRAGMENTS.

### I.

SEPTEMBER sun,  
Shine softly on us now, for very soon  
There will be none  
In heather here through the long afternoon  
To praise you, or to watch the wheeling moon  
On Yennadon.

### II.

I TURNED the mystery  
Round and about,  
Till it seemed plain to me  
Past any doubt  
That Destiny is from within,  
But Fate and Sin  
Are from without.

### III.

THIS is the best of all, a quiet kiss ;  
Hand drawing hand, eye deep in misty eye  
Closing at last ; and then the touch of lips ;  
As a warm bird alighting on her nest  
Draws down and presses close her quivering wings.

## THE THUNDER.

(For V. de S. Pinto).

### I.

THE sky is dark and quiet as a pool,  
And all the stones of Leathertor are still.  
A little quick breeze stirs, and dies. A hawk  
Hangs quivering, high over Lowery Hill.

Wide-eyed, a hare starts suddenly, and goes  
With great uneasy leaps over the ground :  
And all the valley, void of stir and breath,  
Waits revelation flash and flood of sound.

### II.

“SUN'S scalding.”  
“Thunder weather, to-day :  
’Tis gathering heavy out Deancombe way.”

“I mind when a young chap was struck dead  
In the slanting field this side Combeshead,  
A matter of seventeen year ago,

Young Gidley, 'twas. Well, storm came on :  
'Tothers took shelter, but he stood in it  
Dancing and singing so mazed as a linnet,  
And holding his hayfork over his head :  
  
'This here be my umbrella,' he said,  
And a great flash struck him that instant minute."

III.

SUDDEN upon the road's white ache  
Great glaring raindrops hiss and splash.  
Shall we, who fumble in the gloom,  
Find wisdom in the lightning flash ?

No fetter of retarding Time  
Can bind this force omnipotent,  
The god's bright dagger driven through  
Our circles of bewilderment.

Soul, do not wince, but here await  
The angry leaping of the light :  
Either be stricken blind, or see  
Henceforth with more than common sight.

## SHEEPSTOR CHURCHYARD.

O DO not trouble the quiet of our graves :  
The headstones moulder, the poor crumbled flesh  
Could scarce contain that winnowed shred which saves  
Our spirits from long wandering in the dark—  
That winnowed tested shred, that obstinate spark  
Of good we won or did not wholly lose :  
Whose dim precarious light is fanned afresh  
In wider lands, where we may learn to choose  
Our destiny, unhampered by the wet  
Dull fleshy clod the spark cannot infuse.  
Happy austerity, sweet pain ! and yet  
Earth pulls in dreams : yielding, the spirit tries  
To narrow for dark earth his light-filled eyes,  
Peering again where the poor dross is laid,  
This sepulchre of deep untroubled shade.

## EPITAPHS.

### A CLERGYMAN.

**H**ERE lies an old red clergyman ;  
I grant him kindly, staunch and brave :  
Yet wise men cannot sorrow long  
That so much folly is in the grave.

### A SENTRY.

**T**HE snare of sleep held fast his struggling will.  
They found him, and he now may sleep his fill.

### A WALKER.

**H**ERE be the legs that in a day  
Could tramp the whole moor wide  
From Okehampton to Ivybridge  
Forlorn of all their pride  
In Sheepstor churchyard till the Doom  
Entitled for to bide.

### A CHILD.

EAGER freckled Marjorie  
Sleeps beneath the willow tree.  
Fleck and sun-patch, softly creep :  
Twelve can be but light asleep.

### A WISE MAN.

WHEN from the upland of his mind  
He walked among us for a while,  
Wisdom, as if in malice, kept  
Strange reticence beneath his smile.  
Never a word but seemed to hint  
Some vast deliberate unsaid.  
We begged a clearer sign. He shrugged,  
And took his wisdom to the dead.

### JOE GARD.

JOE Gard sleeps underneath this stone  
As all his life he slept—alone.

## THE STRANGER.

AS I sat drinking in 'The Plume' one night,  
A man came swinging in out of the rain,  
Loosened his sodden jacket, and sat down  
On a stool heavily. His rough red face  
A day unshaven, was drawn in a stiff mask  
Of rage and misery, and the little veins  
That thread the corner of the white rolled eye  
Had burst, and filled his eyes with blood. Still silent  
He sat there, with his whiskey-hot untouched,  
Eying a calendar on the mottled wall  
With dull red gaze : and once or twice he drew  
His hard mouth to a harder line of rage,  
And all his forehead corded. Suddenly  
He drank his drink, and turned his gaze on me,  
Leaned staring over, and in a low, hoarse voice  
He said "God damn all women who are cold,"  
Drew his coat round, and strode into the rain.

## DOGGEREL.

A SONG is in my head,  
I never made it.  
I cannot tell what sudden thing  
Betrayed it.

It flies about my head,  
I cannot catch it.  
I have no craft of syllable  
To match it.

Poets would surely hang themselves  
For sorrow,  
Did they not hope for better luck  
To-morrow !

## CORONER'S JURY.

HE was the doctor up to Combe,  
Quiet spoke, dark, weared a moustache.  
And one night his wife's mother died  
After her meal, and he was tried  
For poisoning her.

Evidence come up dark 's a bag,  
But onions is like arsenic :  
'Twas eating they, his lawyer said,  
And rabbit, 'fore she went to bed,  
That took her off.

Jury withdrew. "He saved my child,"  
Says 'Lias Lee. "Think to his wife,"  
Says one. "I tell 'ee, a nit's life  
That there old 'ooman lead 'em both,  
Tedious old toad."

"Give en six months," says easy Joe.  
"You can't do that, sirs," foreman said,  
'Tis neck or nothing, yes or no."  
"All right then, sir," says Joe. "'Tis no,  
Not guilty, sir."

CORONER'S JURY

"You, Jabez Halls?" "I brings it in  
Rabbit and onions ; that's my thought :  
If that didn' kill her, sirs, it ought,  
To her age." So us brought it in  
Rabbit and onions.

Doctor went free, but missis died  
Soon afterward, she broke her heart.  
Still Doctor bide on twenty year  
Walking the moors, keeping apart  
And quiet, like.

## RIDDLES OF THE HEART.

### I.

I WILL not take your tray of little sharp bones,  
I've a silver needle, O woman wailing a corpse !

### II.

I DID but as my fathers did,  
Dealt in the Temple lawfully,  
Changing good money, selling doves—  
Why should He beat and rail on me ?

### III.

WANDERING in a laurel wood  
To come upon a stair  
Of ancient marble, and behold  
The Queen of Egypt there  
Unbar from sullen pins of gold  
The torrent of her hair.

IV.

THEY made the meadow hideous,  
They tramped it to a bog,  
Whom Spring and Sirius make mad,  
The stallion and the dog.

With dark and burning eyes a boy  
Beheld, nor thought it scorn  
To battle through the hedge, and tear  
His forehead on a thorn.

The dog will know his master now,  
The stallion quiet stands :  
The savage mutiny is stilled  
At price of bleeding hands.

## AN ONION MAN.

THE onion man with load a-swing  
Of crinkled onions on a string  
And flashing teeth of Southern sea  
Goes on our gray moor grudgingly.

His dark eyes, slanting left and right,  
Find little gladness in the sight :  
He shifts his pole and makes a face  
And shuffles at a quicker pace,

Crooning to cheer himself along  
A sentimental Breton song.

## AT YELVERTON.

**S**TURDY house, defy the wind,  
Who fills his fist with stinging rain  
And flings it at the window pane ;  
But you're a tough one, you don't mind.

Now he's angered : he gets bolder,  
Grips you by each gable shoulder,  
Shakes till door and shutter rattle  
Through a night of stubborn battle.

House, you've won : disconsolate  
He goes off to scream his hate,  
Noisy bully, coward, lout,  
And shake and beat the little gate  
And bang the garden things about.

While you, good house, may rest and smile.  
There's not your like for many a mile.

## A REFLECTION.

**I**F I drive out this devil of thought ingrained,  
Into my clean swept mind  
Let no seven devils, before the door be shut,  
Eagerly enter, nor let the malignant lead the blind.

## LAUGHTER IN HEAVEN.

(For John Cournos).

**T**HEY will let one mocking heart  
Surely into Paradise,  
Who shall open unto self  
Many blind though godly eyes.

Holy fat stupidities  
Virgins sinless, but not wise,  
Spiritual, yet absurd,  
Will stare upon him in surprise;

—But feel no anger, for their hearts  
Are thoroughly purged of grosser parts,—

Rather smile, and bless his laughter  
Who has bade their virtue see  
New holiness to follow after,  
A more humorous sanctity.

## THE ROAD.

(For Mildred Clarke).

THE village schoolmaster, whose horny eye  
Could daunt the boldest of them, chose a stone,  
Folded his "Times" to make a cushion, sat,  
And puffing at his pipe gave me a lesson :—

"This is the wisdom of the road : to love  
All you can find to love, and love it wholly.  
Take one, take all : we'll no eclectics here,  
No sentimental pickers of fair flowers.  
Take heather and the sunset, take the lark,  
The soft transmuting miracle of rain,  
But take the blood upon the weasel's tooth,  
Ear-stinging hail, sleet, puddles, wind of March,  
The black faced lamb, the crow that pecks his eye out,  
Honestly, all or none. So take your friend,  
And so the common world of flesh and spirit.  
They're equal : he who stresses either one  
Spirit or flesh, heather or weasel's tooth,  
Errs most dishonestly from very life.

There's little hatred here : pretension only,  
A meanness cloaked ; a sickly furtive vice  
Of thought engendered ; love of self that's not  
Self preservation—hate these, if you must.

## THE ROAD

Give sixpence to the beggar on the road :  
Whether he's honest matters not : he wants  
And asks, and you, when you have need to ask,  
Love not to bear refusal.

### Bravery ?

Ay, if you can : both brave and coward rat  
Are drowned, once folly has them in the trap.  
One pitiably shrieks, one struggles dumb.  
The choice is yours.

This bank beside the road  
Wears many different dresses ; so may God.  
And therefore, when you've food and daily need  
Quarrelling's waste of time. The dragonfly  
Has little, loses none."

A creaking cart,  
Swaying from to hedge to hedge along the lane  
Pulled up—"Whoa back !" A boy jumped from the shaft  
And swung the gate. "Good mornin', sir." The cart  
Creaked dully on the grass.

### After a while

We rose, and wandered on.

## THE APOLOGY.

F<sup>OR</sup>GIVE the tears upon a poor fool's face  
Who strained the fumbling uttermost of his power  
To trap for you  
The very spirit, the live and quivering grace  
Of some remembered hour  
With artifice of clumsy fastening word :  
As, with a cage of rude twigs in his hand,  
A dolt might stand  
To capture, as it flew, an exquisite bird.

## DUBLIN DAYS AGAIN.

(For Edward J. O'Brien).

### A MEMORY.

W<sup>HEN</sup> I was as high as that  
I saw a poet in his hat.  
I think the poet must have smiled  
At such a solemn gazing child.

Now wasn't it a funny thing  
To get a sight of J. M. Synge,  
And notice nothing but his hat ?  
Yet life is often queer like that.

## NED.

N<sup>ED</sup> was my uncle's handy man,  
Old stubby Ned Magee ;  
He wheeled me out in a bath chair  
The time I hurt my knee.

He waited till I was tucked in  
By Nora, my tall cousin,  
And ran me through the Dublin streets  
Nineteen to the dozen.

Head down he scuttled on the kerb  
As hard as he could go,  
Till we ran over at a turn  
A colonel's gouty toe.

"Where are you going to, damn your eyes?"  
Came curses thick and fast :  
"The hill o' Howth, sir—hill o' Howth"  
Said Ned, and scuttled past.

. . . . .

And many a happy fishing day  
I had by old Ned's side ;  
And Dublin seemed a lonely place  
The Thursday that he died.

## MIKE MCASSEY GOES HOME.

NOW Glory be to God, I'm drunk,  
My inwards filled with kindly beer,  
And start upon my homeward way  
Aglow with laughter and good cheer.

For this one night I'll take my oath  
In earth beneath or heaven above  
Or hell itself, you'd fail to find  
A creature that I cannot love.

From swelling heart and powerful throat  
I bawl "The Memory of the Dead."  
My striding feet swing valiantly,  
The stars are candles to my head.

## RUN, BOYS, RUN, THE BEGGAR- MAN'S MAD!

**D**ARK eagles from their scowling nest  
Curses swoop to my behest ;  
And I curse most bitterly  
Each fat purse-y man I see.  
You pass and leave my tale unheard  
But wait, sirs, wait ! for I've a word  
Will agonise ye, squeeze ye, twist  
Till the fibres of the wrist  
Burst like ragged bottle-straw,  
Till rolling eye and rigid jaw  
Are witness to the agony  
That shakes yeer rich anatomy.

Now, if you neglect me more,  
By Baal and Belzebub I've swore  
To every beggar-man I'll teach it,  
And from our tearing throats we'll screech it  
Into every rich man's ear,  
And howl him to a hell of fear.  
A hell of fear, a hell of fear,  
With scorching curses ! So shall I  
Get one good laugh before I die.

## JEM.

FITFULLY in the mornings worked  
The under-gardener, James McCann,  
Ragged, red-eyed, red stubble chinned,  
A most unlikely sort of man.

They said he never swallowed food  
But porter was his only diet.  
He took good share of that, God knows,  
And yet, though surly, he was quiet.

He's come round to the kitchen door  
Each afternoon, just short of two.  
"Gi' me me twopence for me pint.  
Sure it's nearly time : ah, Bessie, do !"

"Now Jem, g' back : it's not your time.  
Go on, now, 'n' don't be lookin' sour."  
So Jem would growl and clutter-clop  
Back to the tool-house till the hour.

Bessie would say, by dint of drink  
His gullet and his guts were black.  
And he ran mad before he died,  
And bit a woman in the back.

## SAYS THE MUSE TO ME, SAYS SHE.

YOU are a little tiny man  
Infinitely tinier than  
A moneyspider, carefully  
Noting down upon your cuff  
What you see and what you think—  
Niggling little timid stuff !  
I'd have my poets take to drink,  
Stutter, stammer, stagger, bawl  
The mighty praise and joy of all  
Things create and uncreate,  
A boisterous exultant spate  
Of wild and glorious driven words.  
Tiny man, be drunk with me  
And stammer at immensity !

Well, Ma'am, I hardly think I can  
Follow promptly what you teach.  
But, if you'll wait, then bye-and-bye  
When cuff and care have wrought a speech,  
I'll drink my deepest, and I'll try !





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